

## House Republican Press Release

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### **Rep. Harkins Supports Legislation to Cover Uninsured Children, Create Consumer Registry for Physicians**



**Hartford**—On Thursday, March 16, the Legislature’s Insurance and Real Estate Committee approved legislation cosponsored by State Rep. John Harkins, R-Stratford, designed to extend health insurance to approximately 70,000 children and establish a report card system for physicians. House Bill 5595, An Act Concerning The Healthy Kids Initiative, now goes before the full House of Representatives for consideration.

The legislation would expand eligibility under the state’s Healthcare for Uninsured Kids and Youth (HUSKY) program. HUSKY includes services under the traditional Medicaid program (HUSKY Part A and also provides health services for children in higher-income families (HUSKY Part B).

“Children are the state’s most vulnerable population,” said Rep. Harkins, who serves as a member of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. “Addressing their health needs at an early age is critical. The HUSKY program has provided health coverage for thousands of children in need during the past eight years and this bill is designed to help ensure coverage for any child who might otherwise fall through the cracks of the system.”

Among those testifying in favor of the bill during a March 14 were representatives from the Connecticut Commission on Children, Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut and the Children's Fund of Connecticut.

The bill also requires the state’s Public Health Department (DPH) and Insurance Department to create a physician report card that informs consumers about a physician’s service quality. Physicians would be required to give DPH any information needed to measure performance. The public health commissioner would also be required to publish the report card on the DPH website.

“A physicians’ report card is an excellent pro-consumer initiative,” said Rep. Harkins. “People would be able to access the state registry to make a more informed decision when selecting both general practitioners and specialists.”